

6

Consumer Information

Keywords:

Consumer
Community-Based Organizations
Immunization Promotion Hotlines
Educational Materials
Health Education
Media Campaigns
National Vaccine Injury
Compensation Program (VICP)
Public Awareness
Risk-Benefit Communication
Vaccine Information Statements
(VIS)

Every immunization program should include efforts to inform, influence and motivate lay audiences of all ages about the importance of immunizations. Historically, these activities have included dissemination of technical information through distribution of materials such as Vaccine Information Statements (VIS), fact sheets and brochures. In addition, broader promotional efforts through various mass media can be used to raise public awareness to a level that encourages individuals to visit a health care provider to obtain one or more vaccines or to seek more in-depth

knowledge about immunizations. Immunization programs that develop positive relationships with the local media are often able to achieve communication of well-timed messages to the public about specific immunization issues.

Communication with immunization “consumers” can be undertaken by immunization program staff directly but are sometimes more effective when done in collaboration with community leaders, advocacy groups and organizations such as churches, schools, civic clubs, businesses, and other special interest groups. The role and responsibility of medical providers in educating their patients about immunizations must not be overlooked. All communication efforts should address identified needs for information on the part of individuals and specific groups and should be directed toward improving knowledge, attitudes, and ultimately, immunization-seeking behavior.

References:

- Vaccine Information Statements (CDC) (CD Rom 2001 Immunization Works)
- *Standards for Pediatric and Adolescent Immunization Practices* (CDC) (CDC Rom 2001 Immunization Works)
- *Standards for Adult Immunization Practices Draft* (CDC) (CD Rom 2001 Immunization Works)
- National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) website
<http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/vicp/vicp.htm>

ACTIVITY AREAS

6.1 Information Development and Dissemination

6.2 Vaccine Benefit and Risk Communication

6.1 INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION

ACTIVITIES to inform consumers about vaccine preventable diseases and vaccines to prevent them, through direct communication:

6.1.01 ELEMENTS of an effective consumer information program:

- Determination of the information and education needs for general public and targeted consumer advocacy groups
- Involvement of target audiences in decisions on and production of materials to ensure that written and verbal information is relevant, culturally sensitive, linguistically appropriate, useable and 'owned' by target audiences
- Pre-testing of materials to make sure products are clear, relevant and appealing; and
- Evaluation of the impact of the materials

✓ **6.1.1** Ensure that people of all ages are provided general and specific immunization information in accordance with the program's over-all strategy to assure immunizations for all age groups. *See Chapter 1.1 Program Planning and 6.1.01 ELEMENTS of an effective consumer information program.*

✓ **6.1.2** Update the official program immunization record card ("shot card") whenever new vaccines are recommended by the ACIP.

✓ **6.1.3** Ensure that messages to consumers are relevant, accurate, appropriate and useful. *See 6.1.01 ELEMENTS of an effective consumer information program and 6.1.*

02 WHAT CONSUMERS NEED TO KNOW to seek and accept immunizations.

6.1.4 Assign one or more persons responsibility for gathering, developing and disseminating immunization-related information and materials and include these responsibilities in written job description(s).

6.1.5 Implement procedures to respond to inquiries (telephone, FAX, etc.) about vaccine preventable diseases, vaccines, clinic sites and hours for vaccinations, and other immunization-related concerns.

6.1.6 Provide media with updates on vaccine preventable diseases, new vaccines, targeted “at-risk” populations, immunization recommendations and schedules, planned immunization activities, and information on evidence-based immunization interventions such as child, adolescent and adult sub-population laws/regulations and standing orders.

Performance measure: Number of updates provided proactively to media, by topic **Target:** Set by individual program

6.1.7 Promote hepatitis B vaccination for all children born after 9/30/83 to mothers born in countries with chronic hepatitis B virus infection rates of two percent or higher (Asia, Africa, and northern South America).

ACTIVITIES to improve the quality of program communications with consumers:

6.1.02 WHAT CONSUMERS NEED TO KNOW to seek and accept immunizations

- Information about VPDs
- Vaccines are safe and effective
- Immunization recommendations for their age group (or their child)
- Location of facilities providing immunizations for underserved and under-insured populations
- Where to get immunization information (e.g., hot-line numbers and web sites)
- Responsibility to maintain an immunization record and bring it to all provider visits

6.1.8 Develop written procedures for responding to inquiries from the public.

✓ **6.1.9** Maintain a Consumer Inquiry Log to document consumer questions from telephone, FAX, hot line, and other sources of inquiry about vaccines and vaccination issues such as vaccine safety, side effects, etc. Use this information to identify patterns and trends related to consumer concerns and perceptions about immunization.

ACTIVITIES to enhance consumer education through collaboration with community leaders, advocacy groups, legislators, and other special interest groups:

6.1.10 Provide consumer and advocacy groups, legislators, and special interest groups with information on vaccine preventable diseases, new vaccines, targeted “at-risk” populations, planned immunization activities, and information on recommendations and requirements for immunization of children, adolescents and adults.

Performance measure: *Number [increase] of immunization informational packets provided to consumer groups annually*

Target: *Set by individual program*

6.1.11 Collaborate with consumer and advocacy groups to develop and disseminate consumer information about vaccines for targeted high risk groups recommended to receive influenza and Pneumococcal immunizations.

✓ **6.1.12** Promote use of a patient/parent-held immunization record card, and the need to bring the card to every medical visit through collaboration with consumer advocacy groups and professional associations. All providers not using the official record card should be reminded of the need to revise their own cards whenever new vaccines are recommended by the ACIP. *See Chapter 4. Provider Quality Assurance.*

ACTIVITIES to enhance education of high-risk individuals through collaboration with health care providers:

✓ **6.1.13** Where appropriate, collaborate with tribal clinics, IHS area offices and service units, and other entities that provide medical services to American Indians and Alaska Natives in the development and dissemination of materials about immunizations targeted to Native populations. Emphasis should be place on VPDs such as hepatitis A and hepatitis B for which Native populations are at increased risk.

✓ **6.1.14** Collaborate with public clinics and treatment centers, including HIV counseling centers, intravenous drug use clinics, STD clinics, correctional and juvenile detention centers, etc., in the development and dissemination of consumer materials targeted to adolescents and adults at high risk for hepatitis B.

Performance measure: *Number [increase] of specific program types collaborated with and number of informational products developed*

Target: *Set by individual program*

6.1.15 Collaborate with hospitals, health maintenance organizations, health insurance companies, and professional organizations in their development of immunization information and education materials for distribution to their patients.

6.2 VACCINE BENEFIT and RISK COMMUNICATION

ACTIVITIES to ensure consumer knowledge and understanding of the benefits and risks of vaccines, and of the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program:

For additional activities, refer to *Chapter 4.2 Provider Education* and *Chapter 7.4 Vaccine Safety*.

✓ **6.2.1** Reinforce to all providers their responsibility to ensure clients are aware of the

☞ National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP).

6.2.2 Ensure that the current CDC materials on vaccines and their benefits and risks such as fact sheets and Question/Answer sheets are quickly and widely distributed to media, consumer groups and providers through articles and web sites.

Performance measure: *Percent of new informational materials on vaccine benefits and risks provided to media, consumer advocacy and provider groups within one month of receipt from CDC*

Target: *Set by individual program*

✓ **6.2.3** Ensure new and/or revised Vaccine Information Statements (VIS) is quickly

☞ distributed to providers so clients will be provided with the most current information. Ensure that providers are aware that VIS is available in other languages and the means of obtaining those VIS.

Performance measure: *Percent of new and/or revised VIS distributed to providers within one month of receipt from CDC*

Target: *Set by individual program*